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POLICY REVIEW

UNICEF STRATEGIES IN BASIC EDUCATION

SUMMARY

The mandate of UNICEF is to promote the survival, protection and development of children. Central to this mandate is the right of every child to participate in and benefit from education. Furthermore, education is closely linked to the key civic, economic and social goals of societies.

UNICEF experience of the last 30 years in the field of education shows that: (a) with the organization's limited financial capability, it is important to focus on primary education, which will make an impact on the maximum number of children; (b) non-formal education of equivalent quality should form an integral part of the primary education system; (c) enhancing parents' and other caregivers' knowledge and skills and home- and community-based approaches for early childhood development, as well as "second chance", non-formal basic education for out-of-school youth and women, are important supportive elements in the universal primary education focus; and (d) capacity-building at different levels, with attention to planning, management, monitoring and mobilization at the local level, is the key to the success and sustainability of basic education for all.

The scope of UNICEF education programmes is guided at the country level by each country's national development plan, education plan and the national programme of action. The priority of UNICEF Education for All efforts is the universal participation of children in quality primary education, with girls as the special target population. UNICEF cooperation will emphasize improvement in the access to and quality of primary education.

* E/ICEF/1995/13.

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Within the framework of the organization's overall strategic principles of service delivery, capacity-building, empowerment and advocacy, an appropriate combination of the following operational strategies will guide UNICEF cooperation in education: (a) the expansion of services through a focus on policy development; (b) capacity-building at different levels; (c) the empowerment of beneficiaries; (d) the promotion of intersectoral linkages; (e) advocacy and social mobilization; and (f) resource mobilization.

Efficient management of UNICEF cooperation in basic education will entail balancing a mix of strategies in specific country situations; enhancing UNICEF staff capacity at country, regional and headquarters levels; increasing the allocation of general resources and supplementary funds for education; and establishing effective systems for monitoring progress regularly.

Chapter VIII of the report contains a draft recommendation on the strategies in basic education for Board approval.

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW	1 - 8	4
II.	THE GLOBAL CONTEXT OF BASIC EDUCATION	9 - 12	6
III.	INTERNATIONAL ACTION IN BASIC EDUCATION	13 - 26	10
	A. The major actors and resources	13 - 17	10
	B. Working with partners	18 - 23	11
	C. Complementary role of UNICEF	24 - 26	12
IV.	THE EVOLUTION OF UNICEF EDUCATION ACTIVITIES	27 - 36	13
	A. Evolving priorities	27 - 30	13
	B. Key lessons for the future	31 - 36	14
V.	CHARACTERISTICS OF UNICEF EDUCATION PROGRAMMES	37 - 51	15
	A. Scope of cooperation	37	15
	B. Objectives	38	15
	C. Areas of action	39 - 50	16
	D. New emphases in UNICEF programmes	51	20
VI.	PROGRAMME STRATEGIES	52 - 60	21
	A. Expansion of services through a focus on policy development	53	21
	B. Capacity-building at different levels	54	22
	C. Empowerment of beneficiaries	55	22
	D. Promotion of intersectoral linkages	56 - 57	23
	E. Advocacy and social mobilization	58	23
	F. Resource mobilization	59 - 60	24
VII.	MANAGING UNICEF COOPERATION IN BASIC EDUCATION	61 - 66	24
VIII.	DRAFT RECOMMENDATION	67	26
Annex.	PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT, RETENTION, GENDER DISPARITY AND GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT BY COUNTRY/REGION		28

List of tables

1. Out-of-school children (aged 6-11 years) by region and gender 8
2. Selected education and economic indicators by region 9
3. Donor support for education 11

Figure. BASIC EDUCATION AND PRIMARY EDUCATION 6

I. BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

1. The UNICEF mandate is to promote the survival, protection and development of children. Central to this mandate is the right of and the opportunity for every child to participate in and benefit from basic education. Basic education is the foundation for the full development of human potential - it provides both the essential learning tools as well as the basic knowledge and skills necessary to function effectively in the social, political and economic environment. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts the right of every human being to education (General Assembly resolution 217 (III) A of 10 December 1948). The Convention on the Rights of the Child (General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989) reaffirms children's right to education. Article 28 of the Convention states that, "... with a view to achieving [the right of the child to education] progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity,... " States shall, inter alia, "make primary education compulsory and available free to all ..." (paragraph 1 (a)). Constitutions and laws in most countries recognize the child's right to education.

2. The close links between basic education and key civic, economic and social goals of societies lend a special urgency to the effort to fulfil the promise of basic education for all. Increasing acceptance of the norms of democracy and people's participation in governance in recent years underscore the role of education in consensus-building, developing national unity and establishing shared values. Democracy and good governance can be built only upon a solid foundation of an informed and literate citizenry. Investment in education is key to economic growth, with the social rate of return highest for investment in primary education. By increasing the productivity of the poor, education contributes to better income distribution and the reduction of poverty. An educated population, capable of adapting to change and absorbing skills, is essential for economic development in an environment of growing international competition. The recent experience of the East Asian countries demonstrates how early investment in education helps to lay the foundation for later dynamic economic growth and more equal development and release the productive and creative energies of a society.

3. The March 1995 World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) underscored the fact that the condition of over 1 billion people in absolute poverty is characterized by the absence of basic educational opportunities. Commitment 6 of the Declaration and Programme of Action of the Social Summit obligates the participants to promote the goals of universal and equitable access to quality education at national and international levels and to attain these goals in each country through time-bound national strategies. These measures were seen as essential ingredients in the effort to eradicate poverty, promote productive employment and foster social integration (A/CONF.166/L.3/Add.2).

4. The beneficial impacts of education, especially of the education of women, on social development are well-recognized. The number of years of schooling of women has been found to be closely related to the reduction of child mortality and morbidity, the improvement of family health and nutrition, and the slowing of population growth. The International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo, Egypt, in September 1994, again highlighted the central role of the education of girls and women in lowering population growth, promoting women's status in society and contributing to sustainable human development.

5. The changing concept of development, from a narrow preoccupation with national income to a broader concern with people's well-being and their capacity to better themselves and to improve their environment, casts a new light on the importance of education. Human development - interpreted as widening human choices in economic, political, social and cultural terms - assigns a critical

role to education. The new vision of human development will remain empty rhetoric until education enables people to understand and exercise the choices that are promised by this new vision.

6. The recognition of the central importance of education in promoting human development has led to three areas of agreement on educational priorities. First, it is recognized that priority must be given to basic education since it is the foundation of national educational system and because basic education contributes most substantially to overall economic and social development, including to the reduction of poverty, fertility and child mortality. Second, it is recognized that the core of basic education is primary education for children since they embody the future of a society. Third, the education of girls and women has emerged as the most precious investment that a society can make in its future.

7. The World Conference on Education for All (EFA), held in Jomtien, Thailand, in March 1990, affirmed national and international obligations to provide basic education for all and helped to revitalize and sharpen the focus of UNICEF efforts in the area of education. "Jomtien" emphasized not only access to education, but equity and learning achievement through broadening the means and scope of basic education. The decade goals for children and development adopted at the World Summit for Children in September 1990 endorsed the Jomtien goals, emphasizing the priority to universal access to primary education, completion of the primary stage by at least 80 per cent of the children and reduction of the gender gap at this level. The mid-decade goals, promoted by UNICEF as stepping stones for achieving the decade goals, concentrate on this priority.

8. The concept of basic education that guides UNICEF is both broad in vision and focused in action (see the figure below). UNICEF support for basic education must be seen within the context of UNICEF work in primary health care (PHC), nutrition, water supply and sanitation, environmental improvement, the protection of children in especially difficult situations, family planning, women's empowerment and poverty alleviation, all of which are aimed at improving the well-being of children and women. Education plays a key role in supporting, strengthening and ensuring the sustainability of these programmes, as well as standing on its own merits.

Figure

BASIC EDUCATION AND PRIMARY EDUCATION

Basic education consists of a combination of knowledge, values and skills that serves as the foundation for an individual's life-long learning. Although there will be differences in what constitutes "basic education" from society to society, there are a number of fundamentals that are common across cultural, social and political boundaries, namely, literacy and numeracy (or the learning skills) and competency and essential knowledge (the life skills) that enable one to function in one's physical and social environment. The life skills include essential knowledge and skills of basic science, health and nutrition, socialization and communication, critical thinking, problem-solving and analysis, the content of which will vary according to the particular context.

Basic education meets the fundamental learning needs of children, youth and adults, going beyond the confines of formal primary education. This expanded vision of basic education encompasses all ages and all modalities, focuses on learning and acquiring specific competencies rather than on institutional forms, and promotes a unified basic education system with mutually supportive and complementary components.

Primary education for children is the most important component of basic education, if only because the human life cycle requires that the basic competencies and life skills be acquired at an early age. The formal primary school is the principal vehicle for primary education, but other complementary non-formal and flexible approaches are needed to make primary education universal. Other programmes which support progress towards that goal, but which are also important in their own right, are "second chance" primary education for youth and adults, adult education and literacy, early childhood programmes and parents' education.

The absence of primary education of an acceptable quality remains a serious problem in most parts of the developing world. UNICEF, therefore, concentrates on universal primary education as the priority for its EFA efforts, with girls and women as a special target population. Early childhood development (ECD) and adult basic education serve as supporting efforts. The relative emphasis and mix of activities will vary from country to country.

II. THE GLOBAL CONTEXT OF BASIC EDUCATION

9. During the last 20 years, significant progress has been made in the state of education world-wide. The average literacy rate for all developing countries rose from 43 per cent in 1970 to 65 per cent in 1990. The average net primary school enrolment rate for school-age children of all developing countries rose from 50 per cent in 1970 to 76 per cent in 1990. This both relative and absolute increase in primary school enrolment took place in the context of economic recession, external debt burden and high population growth rates in many developing countries.

10. However, the global enrolment averages do not tell the whole story. Two low-income regions, sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, have, in general, net enrolment rates much lower than the global average. The greatest challenge lies in Africa, where, in the 1980s, declines in real expenditure in education led to decline in primary school enrolment rates. The reductions in expenditure were particularly steep in the poorest countries and, as a result, educational systems deteriorated. As illustrated in table 1 below, in 1990, one half of the

school-age children in Africa were not in school. Available data indicate that the negative trend in enrolment in sub-Saharan Africa has continued in the 1990s.

11. The issues of completion, drop-outs, quality and learning achievement are critical areas of concern in all developing countries. Some 30 per cent of those children who enrol in primary schools in developing countries do not complete primary education, and those who complete their primary education do not acquire adequate knowledge and skills to improve their lives or to continue learning. The Latin America and Caribbean and East Asia regions have achieved some degree of success in providing access to primary education for most children, but high rates of repetition and low levels of learning achievement underline the need, even in these regions, to address great disparities in the quality of available educational opportunities. Issues of quality, disparities in opportunities and ECD also are critical in most countries of the Middle East and North Africa. Above all, access to a learning place with a trained teacher and learning materials is still beyond the reach of some 132 million out-of-school children in developing countries (see table 1 below).

12. The gender gap in education adds another dimension to the inadequacy and inefficiency of the existing systems of education. In 1990, two thirds of the 948 million adults who were illiterate were women, and 77 million of the estimated 132 million out-of-school children were girls (see table 1 below). In the 40 lowest-income countries, the gap in primary school enrolment rates between boys and girls averages 20 percentage points. The situation is most pronounced in South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and some countries of the Middle East and North Africa, especially in the rural areas of these regions. Selected educational and economic indicators of various regions, as presented in table 2 below, show that during the period 1986-1992, sub-Saharan Africa had the lowest gross primary school enrolment rate, with a 19 percentage point difference between boys' and girls' enrolment and an extremely high (3 per cent) population growth rate. Likewise, South Asia had a low gross enrolment rate, a high gender gap (25 percentage points) and a high population growth rate (over 2 per cent). Per capita gross national product (GNP) was low in both regions, as was the share of public expenditure on education as a percentage of GNP.

Table 1. Out-of school children (aged 6-11 years) by region and gender

Selected indicators	Sub-Saharan Africa	South Asia	East Asia	Middle East	Latin America and the Caribbean	Total developing countries
1980						
Total number of out-of-school children aged 6-11 years (millions)	26	59	55	9	9	158
Out-of-school children aged 6-11 years as percentage of total number of children aged 6-11 years	43	40	25	33	17	27
Total number of out-of-school girls aged 6-11 years (millions)	15	38	32	6	5	96
Out-of-school girls aged 6-11 years as percentage of total number of girls aged 6-11 years	49	53	30	43	18	38
1990						
Total number of out-of-school children aged 6-11 years (millions)	41	48	26	9	8	132
Out-of-school children aged 6-11 years as percentage of total number of children aged 6-11 years	50	27	14	24	13	21
Total number of out-of-school girls aged 6-11 years (millions)	22	32	14	5	4	77
Out-of-school girls aged 6-11 years as percentage of total number of girls aged 6-11 years	54	38	16	31	13	29

Source: UNESCO, 1993 Trends and Projections of Enrolment by Level of Education, by Age and by Sex, 1960-2025, Paris.

Table 2. Selected education and economic indicators by region

Selected indicators	Sub-Saharan Africa	Middle East and North Africa	South Asia	East Asia and Pakistan	Latin America and the Caribbean
Primary school enrolment ratio (gross percentage)					
1960	36	56	58	103	73
1986-1992	67	97	88	117	104
Percentage of entrants reaching grade 5 (1986-1992)	61	90	59	86	60
Primary school enrolment rate of girls as percentage of boys (1986-1992)	81	85	75	94	98
Secondary school enrolment rate of girls as percentage of boys (1986-1992)	64	74	58	84	108
Female adult literacy rate as percentage of males (1990)	67	66	54	81	97
Population growth rate (%) (1980-1993)	3.0	2.9	2.2	1.7	2.1
GNP per capita a/ (1992)	504	1 977	313	800	2 648
Public expenditure on education as percentage of GNP (1991)	4.6	5.5	4.1	3.4	4.2

Source: UNICEF, State of the World's Children Report, 1995; UNESCO, World Education Report, 1993.

a/ In United States dollars.

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III. INTERNATIONAL ACTION IN BASIC EDUCATION

A. The major actors and resources

13. Traditionally, the major providers of education are Governments, communities, parents, professional bodies and voluntary and other organizations. The Government has a key role to play in the provision of education for all. Overall responsibility, policy formulation, systems creation, planning, coordination and quality control remain very much the responsibility of the Government. Moreover, the Government remains the major source of funding for EFA, although a system of partnerships between the Government and various communities can increase the financial resources available to education. In particular, the Government must ensure that EFA as a basic human right is available to all. UNICEF, therefore, views the Government as one of its most important partners in EFA.

14. The major international actors in basic education are the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and other United Nations agencies, especially the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); the World Bank and the regional development banks; bilateral donors; and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and foundations. The international providers of assistance to basic education, in addition to bringing financial assistance, exercise a significant influence on policies and priorities by bringing a global perspective and experience to the national scene, providing technical assistance in developing and implementing national plans, and supporting capacity-building and catalytic activities.

15. Resources for education have come primarily from within the developing countries themselves. Out of the total public and private expenditure on education, it is estimated that only 2 per cent is financed by external donors. The reporting system of external assistance does not provide an accurate measure of the share of external assistance devoted to basic education. A rough estimate is that out of an overall share of 9 per cent of total official development assistance devoted to education, less than 10 per cent was spent on primary education, literacy and ECD in 1993. By comparison, an estimated one half of national education expenditure in developing countries is devoted to the basic level. All of UNICEF assistance in education is for basic education.

16. The post-Jomtien period witnessed a shift in donor policies and resource commitments to basic education. The bilateral donors have shown increased interest in basic education, although the actual shift in the allocation of funds to the sector has been slower to materialize. The multilateral donors, especially the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO and UNFPA, have increased substantially their resources for basic education (see table 3 below). In 1993 and 1994, World Bank lending to the education sector totalled approximately $2 billion per year, close to one half of which has been allocated to primary education. UNICEF has more than doubled its resources for basic education from $37 million in 1987 to $87 million in 1994. However, in 1994, education accounted for only 11 per cent of UNICEF total programme expenditure as compared to 25 per cent for health. Including expenditures on education in emergencies, UNICEF total education expenditure rises to $103 million, 13 per cent of total programme expenditure. The current medium-term plan for the period 1994-1997 (E/ICEF/1994/3) proposes to raise the share of programme expenditure for basic education to 18 per cent by the end of the plan period.

Table 3. Donor support for education

(In millions of United States dollars)

Donors	1980		1990	
	Amount	Percentage	Amount	Percentage
Total	4 480	100	6 035	100
Bilateral	3 595	80	3 640	60
Multilateral	885	20	2 395	40
of which: World Bank	440	10	1 487	25
UNICEF	35	0.8	64	1

Source: UNESCO, World Education Report, 1993, Paris; UNICEF programme statistics.

17. A restructuring of external assistance to education in terms of both quantity and quality of aid is needed to support Jomtien goals. Donors need to increase their education aid budget and increase the share for basic education in education aid. More importantly, such assistance should take a longer-term perspective, involve policy dialogue for a comprehensive sectoral support, focus on national capacity-building, ensure equity and improve learning achievement. Both the national authorities and their international partners have to share the responsibility for mobilizing resources for basic education in line with the 20/20 approach to resource mobilization, which was endorsed by WSSD in March 1995. This approach suggests that at least 20 per cent of both national and donor budgets should be earmarked for essential social services, consisting of basic education, PHC and nutrition, family planning, and safe drinking water and sanitation.

B. Working with partners

18. The UNESCO programme for basic education focuses on policy and planning support and technical assistance in expanding access to basic education and improving the quality and relevance of education. UNESCO assists programmes for reducing illiteracy, especially among women, out-of-school youth, street children and refugees. With the growing realization of the importance of primary education for economic growth and poverty alleviation, World Bank lending for primary and lower secondary education has increased, the education of girls is receiving explicit focus and funds are being used less for buildings and more for educational inputs. The UNDP focus on sustainable human development leads it to stress educational outcomes, the targeting of disadvantaged populations and linkages between sectors and partners. UNFPA promotes population education and cooperates with other organizations to support the education of girls at primary and secondary levels.

19. The resources and capacities of UNICEF form a small, but strategic contribution to national and international EFA efforts. At the country level, UNICEF undertakes its education activities in close collaboration with its national partners, seeking ways to ensure that national EFA programmes and priorities succeed. It actively promotes and encourages cooperation with other external donors in supporting a coordinated and coherent national basic

education programme. It also seeks collaboration with the major Jomtien partners - UNESCO, UNDP and the World Bank - as well as with other international, bilateral and non-governmental organizations.

20. UNICEF and UNESCO have cooperated closely since they were founded. Specific agreements of cooperation between the two organizations were drawn up in 1972, 1982 and 1991. In 1989, one year before the World Conference on EFA, a Joint Committee on Education (JCE), comprised of representatives of the Executive Boards of UNICEF and UNESCO, was formed to guide the collaboration of the two organizations (E/ICEF/1989/12, decision 1989/17). Under the current UNESCO/UNICEF cooperative agreement, a number of collaborative activities have been undertaken such as developing a system of monitoring learning achievement, identifying and disseminating educational innovations, improving the provision of basic learning materials and promoting the education of girls and women. There is also a collaborative project to develop qualitative indicators for educational progress and to assist several countries to strengthen their educational statistics systems.

21. As a follow-up to the Jomtien Conference, UNICEF, along with other Jomtien partners, continues to work through the EFA Forum on reviewing progress towards the EFA goals, supporting mobilization and advocacy efforts and encouraging the sharing of experiences and assessment of strategies at national and international levels. A formal review of progress since Jomtien up to mid-decade has been initiated through the EFA Forum. One of the mobilization activities was to bring together the leaders of the nine most populous developing countries in India in 1993 in order to generate high-level political support and societal commitment to EFA goals. These countries account for over 70 per cent of world's illiteracy. The nine countries (the E-9 Group) have continued their collaboration, and their leaders met again at WSSD to reaffirm their commitment and plan future exchanges.

22. In response to the huge challenge facing education in Africa, the four Jomtien sponsors partners and UNFPA are in the process of developing a programme of support for basic education in Africa. The purpose of the programme, known as Focus on EFA in Africa, is to bring interested donors to work together in compact with individual countries to develop and implement basic education plans.

23. Partnership-building on behalf of the education of girls has been given a high priority. In partnership with the Canadian International Development Agency, UNICEF has initiated a programme to support the education of girls in 15 African countries which is expected to be extended to a larger number of countries. Global-level collaboration in organizing conferences and seminars and harmonizing policies for the education of girls is ongoing with UNESCO, the World Bank, UNDP and UNFPA. In the area of ECD, UNICEF is collaborating with several international NGOs such as Save the Children Fund, the Bernard Van Leer Foundation and the Aga Khan Foundation, as well as with the World Bank and UNESCO.

C. Complementary role of UNICEF

24. The rationale for UNICEF cooperation in education lies in its obligations to promote and support comprehensive national programmes for meeting the survival, protection and development needs of children. The linkage of education with the implementation and sustainability of all other UNICEF activities for child survival and development (CSD) is an important consideration for the development of UNICEF policies and strategies for basic education.

25. As noted above, UNICEF activities in basic education complement those of UNESCO, the World Bank, UNDP, UNFPA and other providers of external assistance. Several specific characteristics of the UNICEF mandate and operations give it some comparative advantages to engage in education activities:

(a) The broad UNICEF mandate to work in a multisectoral fashion for the development of the whole child, which offers the opportunity to promote links between learning activities and other areas that affect the survival, protection and development of children and women;

(b) The catalytic role of UNICEF in creating appropriate conditions for the implementation of the rights of the child;

(c) The UNICEF country programming process, which enables it to work for holistic social development within the national policy and planning framework;

(d) The extensive field presence of UNICEF at national and subnational levels and the ability to work, at least selectively, with communities and NGOs make it possible to respond flexibly and effectively to people's needs and concerns;

(e) The wide-ranging experience of UNICEF in advocacy, communication and social mobilization.

26. The potential of these special advantages can be realized when UNICEF works in collaboration and seeks complementarity of efforts with other partners active in basic education.

IV. THE EVOLUTION OF UNICEF EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

A. Evolving priorities

27. UNICEF cooperation in education evolved from assisting both primary and secondary education in the 1960s to a focus on primary education, non-formal education and ECD in the 1970s and the 1980s. In 1980, the Executive Board requested UNICEF to support reorientation and reform of primary school to make it more accessible to underserved children, to strengthen basic education programmes for youth and women and to pay more attention to pre-school children (E/ICEF/673, paragraph 114). In 1982, a UNESCO/UNICEF Working Group developed a programme on the universalization of primary education and literacy, which helped to redirect UNICEF cooperation in education in a number of countries. In 1984, the Executive Board endorsed a policy review of ECD (E/ICEF/1984/L.1), which emphasized the intellectual, social and emotional aspects of child development and the important role of parents in these areas (E/ICEF/1984/13, paragraph 79). In the discussion of programme matters at its 1986 session, a number of delegations to the UNICEF Executive Board expressed the view that the education of women was probably the single most important factor in improving the survival and well-being of children. The UNICEF medium-term plan for the period 1985-1989 (E/ICEF/1986/3) also called for continued support to education for women (E/ICEF/1986/12, paragraph 31).

28. Over the years, UNICEF cooperation in education has covered a wide range of activities. In primary education, support was provided for curriculum reform, the development and production of teaching/learning aids and textbooks, teacher training and upgrading, the strengthening of planning and management capacities, and improvement in monitoring and evaluation. A variety of non-formal education activities were supported to provide learning opportunities for girls, women and other disadvantaged groups. Until the 1980s, pre-school

education projects were supported in many countries, but often they were very limited in coverage and relatively high cost. Since then, the emphasis has shifted to more widely affordable home- and community-based early child care and stimulation activities.

29. Education and training are important elements in most UNICEF-assisted programmes, although these training activities are not counted as education assistance in UNICEF financial reporting. The following have all been a critical part of responding to the UNICEF mandate of delivering basic services to children and women: The training of traditional birth attendants, PHC workers, maintenance workers of water supply and sanitation facilities; using primary schools for promoting the health and well-being of children through concepts such as the child-to-child approach; literacy and skills training for women's income-generating activities; education in health and environmental sanitation, etc.

30. Following the Jomtien Conference, UNICEF, with the encouragement of the Executive Board, refocused its support on the development of policies and strategies and on translating them into operational activities aimed at assisting countries to achieve universal primary education, where a significant proportion of children do not complete primary education. The ratification by most countries of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and their adoption of the goals of the World Summit for Children provided additional impetus to the effort in basic education.

B. Key lessons for the future

31. The experience of the last 30 years of activity in the field of education points to lessons that will guide future programmes. The most important among these lessons are detailed in paragraphs 32 to 36 below.

A focus on primary education

32. With the limited financial capability of UNICEF, it is important to focus on an area of basic education where an impact could be made on the largest number of children. In the past, the organization's limited resources, both financial and in terms of staff, sometimes have been dispersed over a number of fragmented activities, without a major impact in any one area. The absence of primary education of an acceptable quality still remains a serious problem in most parts of the developing world. For UNICEF, therefore, primary education through formal and non-formal channels has to be the principal focus of its education activities.

The complementary role of non-formal education

33. Non-formal education, because of its inherent flexibility, offers a special opportunity to extend the reach of education to out-of-school and unreached children and women and also to strengthen the educational components of such services as child health and nutrition, water supply and sanitation and development activities for women. Non-formal primary education programmes, however, have to be made an integral part of a unified primary education system and of comparable quality to those provided through the formal school system. A second-rate education provided through non-formal programmes will neither be valued by parents nor provide long-lasting benefits to children. Equally important, non-formal approaches should be incorporated, wherever appropriate, into formal primary schools to make them responsive to children's circumstances. The cost-effectiveness of new initiatives in this respect, however, should be assessed before they are replicated widely.

Home- and community-based early childhood development programmes

34. UNICEF has moved from support for pre-school institutions, which generally cater for the more privileged children, to support for home- and community-based ECD programmes. New knowledge about the impact of early child stimulation on later performance in school, as well as the beneficial impact of the involvement of parents and community in their children's early development, support the case for affordable community-based programmes for child care and parental education.

A focus on adult basic education rather than adult literacy

35. UNICEF support of narrow and isolated adult literacy programmes has given way to education programmes for out-of-school youth and women in order to give them a second chance for basic education. The emphasis is on youth and adult education that strengthens, or is a part of, programmes in PHC, family planning, enhancement of child care and parenting skills, environmental improvement and poverty alleviation. A major component of adult basic education needs to be teaching parents about the care and stimulation of young children and about how parents and members of the community can promote the basic education of children.

Local capacity-building is more important for programme sustainability than the provision of supplies and equipment

36. The limited resources of UNICEF can have a longer-lasting impact if used to build the local capacities and skills necessary for effective programmes rather than for the provision of supplies. Where the provision of supplies is supported, the emphasis has shifted to local materials and resources rather than pre-packaged imported supplies.

V. CHARACTERISTICS OF UNICEF EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

A. Scope of cooperation

37. The scope of UNICEF actions in basic education will include universal primary education, with special attention to girls and women, and ECD and adult basic education as supporting components. Different countries are at different stages of their economic and educational development (see the annex). The relative emphasis and mix of activities will vary from country to country according to the level of progress in each country.

B. Objectives

38. The five strategic objectives of UNICEF education programmes are:

(a) To increase enrolment, retention and completion rates of primary school-age children in formal schools and non-formal programmes;

(b) To reduce gender and geographic disparities in enrolment and completion;

(c) To improve the proportion of enrolled students achieving minimum levels of learning;

(d) To enable parents to better prepare young children for education by improving their knowledge and skills of early child care;

(e) To enhance mutually supportive linkages between basic education and other programmes for children and women.

C. Areas of action

39. With its analysis of the situation of children and women and the formulation of strategies and objectives for UNICEF cooperation in a country, the country programming process is the mechanism for adapting global goals to the circumstances of each country. A country programme will consist of a combination of strategic and catalytic activities in the areas described below.

Universal access to primary education

40. The priority for UNICEF EFA efforts is the universal participation of children in quality primary education. Consistent with this policy, UNICEF will dedicate the major portion of its limited financial and human resources to provide strategic support for the attainment of universal primary education. Because the formal system has the potential to reach most children, UNICEF will work closely with Governments and other educational partners to ensure that primary education systems are efficient and cost-effective. As the formal school system alone cannot meet the demands of universal primary education in many countries, UNICEF will promote a unified system of primary education with diversified approaches by (a) incorporating non-formal modalities, where necessary, within the formal system; (b) supporting non-formal primary education of comparable quality; and (c) fostering a partnership of Governments, NGOs and communities to ensure primary education of acceptable quality for all children.

41. To improve access, the options are the improvement and effective use of existing schools, the expansion and improvement of complementary non-formal approaches and the expansion of new facilities, as described below:

(a) The improvement of often neglected, existing schools and the provision of teachers and teaching/learning materials may yield the best pay-off in expanding access as well as improving quality. Existing facilities need to be optimally used through such means as double shifts and multi-grade classes;

(b) When the formal system cannot be expanded fast enough or it fails to serve difficult-to-reach groups, non-formal approaches have to be used. Common features of successful non-formal primary education are: para-teachers from the community; short initial training and strong supervision for teachers; a small catchment area; active parental involvement; a simplified curriculum; the provision for essential learning materials; little or no capital costs; and NGO-community partnership;

(c) Building new facilities takes a longer time and is expensive. As a matter of policy, UNICEF does not assist capital construction. In promoting universal access to primary education, UNICEF will consider support for community-built and community-contributed facilities for especially disadvantaged groups and where locally accepted technical standards are set and applied. This support may be in the form of construction materials and technical assistance.

Improving the quality of primary education

42. UNICEF will place an emphasis on both quantity and quality as inseparable components of a basic education that lays the foundation for further learning and development of children, preparing them to participate actively, fully and wisely in facing the challenges of the new century. This includes (a) focusing on what children learn in basic education by defining minimum required levels of achievement (e.g., in areas such as literacy, numeracy, basic science and life skills) and developing the means to assess their achievement; and (b) enhancing the quality and relevance of education by paying greater attention to the determination of content, the development of teaching methods and materials,

free of gender and other biases, the promotion of child-centred pedagogy and the provision of better teacher training, support and incentives. UNICEF experience has underscored the following needs:

(a) A common problem is to transform and adapt the formal curriculum into relevant, practical and interesting learning materials, lesson plans, teacher's guides, supportive learning aids and textbooks that encompass the essential learning needs of children. The capacities of national institutions need to be improved to enable them to develop the learning materials and to help schools to adapt and add to these materials;

(b) Child-centred and active learning approaches, in contrast to traditional rote learning, have to be propagated widely. The child as the active learner, with processes suited to the child's needs, age and interests, must receive focus. Knowledge and skills have to be related to understanding, analysis and real life situations. Moreover, school and learning should become enjoyable, not a drudgery;

(c) The child-to-child approach provides important content and methodology for education. The child should not be the object of education programmes, but an active participant in the whole process;

(d) The early grades of primary school will receive special attention as it is in these years that drop-out and repetition rates are the highest and children's attitudes and commitment to schooling are formed. The first years of primary school need to be adapted to the varying levels of preparedness of children, recognizing that most children do not have the benefit of formal pre-school programmes;

(e) A policy of teaching in the mother tongue in the early grades of primary education and a later transition to a national or an international language is pedagogically defensible and should be promoted;

(f) Multi-grade teaching is a useful strategy that can enhance both teacher efficiency and pupil learning, particularly for small schools in remote areas. It is, in fact, more widespread than usually recognized and is carried out without essential reorientation in teaching methods;

(g) The teacher is the key in improving the quality of learning. Programmes to upgrade the skills and competence of primary school teachers through pre-service and in-service training have to be cost-effective and sufficient to meet the needs. Innovative teacher-training programmes, whereby a large number of teachers are provided a relatively short period of pre-service training followed by periodic in-service training and close supervision, have proved to be effective in many formal and non-formal programmes. Programmes to ensure that para-teachers from the community attain higher academic and professional training are particularly important to develop relevant community-based quality basic education;

(h) Equally important is the training of administrators and planners such as head teachers, education officers, directors and supervisors. The key role of head teachers in the educational process necessitates special emphasis on their training, with attention to closer links between the school, the parents and the community, as well as to the development of higher academic, professional and managerial skills;

(i) The quality, quantity and relevance of textbooks, supplementary readers and library books are critical to quality education. The availability of books and reading materials in schools, especially in poorer communities, has to be ensured. Lower-cost production methods and the improvement of capacities in production and distribution, leading to national self-reliance, have to be promoted;

(j) Support in the form of supplies and equipment for innovative and experimental efforts in national education programmes is an important element, particularly for countries facing serious budgetary constraints. Supply items could include printing equipment for printing textbooks and reading materials; paper for textbooks and teachers' aids; printed textbooks; instructional aids; school supplies, including chalk, blackboards, sports equipment and office equipment; agricultural and handicraft tools; and transportation equipment to facilitate effective supervision and inspection. For a large-scale public service such as primary education, supplies and equipment, as much as possible, should be indigenous rather than imported;

(k) The potential of distance education to enrich and enhance the training of teachers and administrators, orient parents and management committees of schools and raise public awareness about educational issues is far from being fully utilized. There are imaginative approaches and methods that have been developed and applied in distance education which should be adopted more widely;

(l) UNICEF recognizes the tremendous potential of traditional and modern means of communication to help convey essential knowledge and information and to educate people. UNICEF will encourage and assist in the use of such means which are appropriate to country context and linked to the objectives of the survival, protection and development of children;

(m) Research, innovation and evaluation are of critical importance for improving the quality, relevance and effectiveness of the educational process. They are essential for the renewal of the education system. UNICEF will support research and evaluation, particularly that related to promoting basic education objectives and judged to be essential for development of policies and programmes in a country.

The education of girls

43. UNICEF strongly and explicitly advocates affirmative action in favour of the education of girls. At the same time, it argues that the education of girls should not be seen as a discrete activity, but as part and parcel of national primary and basic education systems and plans. Mainstreaming girls in the national system of universal primary education, however, entails measures that would make the system responsive to girls' special needs and concerns. Where non-formal or alternative education opportunities are necessary, it has to be ensured that such programmes offer learning opportunities and outcomes equivalent to those of formal schools. The necessary commitment of financial resources, technical support and human resources have to exist to achieve optimal outcome in non-formal programmes. A gender-based dichotomy of programmes - formal schools for boys and non-formal programmes for girls - has to be avoided. Since the reduction of gender disparity in primary school enrolment and completion is an important mid-decade and decade goal, the collection of gender- and age-disaggregated data will be an important part of monitoring progress towards this goal.

Early childhood development

44. Learning begins at birth and continues throughout the life of an individual. Care, attention and affection in the early stages of life determine, to a great extent, the child's later intellectual and emotional development. Relevant ECD programmes help to compensate for the deprived family and community environments of many children. A stimulating and caring environment is an essential foundation for education. Parents and caregivers need to have the knowledge and skills to promote and protect the normal growth and development of the young child. UNICEF support in this area will be

directed to improving the skills and capacities of parents and caregivers and to community- and family-based activities, with attention paid to cost-effectiveness and programme sustainability.

Adult education and literacy

45. Adult basic education is a key to quality of life, democratic empowerment and poverty alleviation. Moreover, children depend on adults - parents, relatives, caregivers, teachers, policy makers - and their decisions. Effective participation in education by parents and communities requires that they have basic information, knowledge and skills. The emphasis needs to be on expanding the opportunities for education and channels of information and communication for the whole society. Well-targeted, well-planned and sustained adult basic education programmes should replace isolated and untargeted interventions. In this regard, mass media provide an exciting challenge for the imaginative expansion of adult education.

Post-primary education

46. Current UNICEF policy is to confine its assistance to basic education, except for the training of primary teachers. Basic education in some countries includes the lower secondary stage. Moreover, basic education is a part of the total continuum of the national education system. Even before a country approaches the goal of universal primary education, the consequences for post-primary education will have to be given attention. Policy dialogue on the linkages between basic education and post-basic and secondary education is an appropriate UNICEF concern. For example, the problem of a post-primary learning gap for a large number of young people unable to enter the secondary school requires a consideration of policies regarding the expansion of the secondary stage and other post-primary alternatives. It is not too early to begin to address the "second generation" problems beyond universal primary education and the goals for the year 2000. In disadvantaged areas, support to secondary education for girls willing to take up a teaching career may be necessary to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of female teachers within the school system.

Education for children in emergencies

47. Education is a basic right of all children in all countries and in all situations. This includes re-establishing schools and other learning opportunities as soon as possible after a sudden disaster or other short-duration emergencies, and providing similar facilities and opportunities during a protracted emergency in order that children are not doubly victimized by the emergency. This is one of the most important means of restoring a sense of normalcy to the lives of children in communities disrupted by an emergency, and it can contribute to overcoming the psychological trauma that many will have experienced. Therefore, UNICEF advocates and supports the rapid re-establishment of the basic education system, especially primary education; advances the education of girls; and promotes active community participation in the planning and management of schools and other educational activities. Education programmes will usually be planned and implemented in phases based on a rapid assessment of the situation. A first phase typically focuses on what can be done rapidly to support local initiatives to restart classes (and recreational activities) for children. Later phases would focus on refining educational activities to suit local conditions, incorporating, among other things, life skills relevant to the prevailing situation; the provision of training and professional support to teachers and para-professionals; and the development of curricula and related materials such as educational kits. UNICEF will work closely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and UNESCO in relation to refugees and displaced people; and with UNESCO, UNDP, the World Bank, the World Food Programme and NGOs with regard to other emergency-affected populations. Learning methods and content of "peace

education" and conflict resolution may be promoted in or through schools in collaboration with other social sector programmes. Education programmes will be used, where necessary, to help children affected by psychological trauma and to counsel their families.

Education for children in especially difficult situations

48. Child labourers working under exploitative conditions constitute the majority of the world's children in especially difficult situations. A distinction has to be made between work for children that is not harmful to their health and well-being and that does not interfere with their education and child labour that is exploitative and an obstacle to children's participation in education. Primary education represents the most effective means to prevent and eliminate exploitative child labour. To attract child labourers into school, the provision of education services must be flexible in terms of schedule and location, and the relevance and quality of education must be upgraded. Responsive and participatory learning methods that stimulate attitudinal and behavioural changes are necessary for the social reintegration of exploited children. The commitment of employers, communities and Governments is needed for education programmes to reach the unacceptably large numbers of out-of-school child labourers.

49. UNICEF also will continue to advocate for and support basic educational services for children with disabilities. Whenever possible, these children should be accommodated in regular classrooms to facilitate their social integration and to offer them educational opportunities in a cost-effective manner. The principle that will guide this effort is that there are differences in children's learning preparedness and ability and education programmes have to be sensitive and responsive to these differences.

50. Children with human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) present a new, complex and growing challenge to society in a growing number of countries and to organizations such as UNICEF, which promote the protection of these children. Support will be provided for community-based programmes that recognize the rights and dignity of children with HIV/AIDS in order to enable these children to participate in education activities.

D. New emphases in UNICEF programmes

51. The following elements of UNICEF education activities represent new emphases in UNICEF assistance in education:

(a) Targeting major system problems, such as access, equity, retention and efficiency, and focusing on countries or regions with the greatest need and challenge in basic education, such as the nine high-population countries (the E-9 Group), sub-Saharan Africa and least developed countries;

(b) An emphasis on learning processes and outcomes and on developing mechanisms for monitoring that essential learning achievement has been attained in primary education;

(c) A systemic and systematic approach to the long-term development and sustainability of education systems, including work on policy analysis, research and data-based decision-making, supporting decentralized and area-based planning and management of universal primary education;

(d) Promoting cost-effective systemic reforms targeted at universalization of education, with quality enhancement. A particular area of concern is reducing repetitions at primary level;

(e) The effective use of new technologies for disseminating information and strengthening the process of education;

(f) Ensuring that education plays an important role in re-establishing normalcy in emergency situations and assisting the victims in their ability to cope;

(g) A concern with the years beyond primary education and with the education needs of children in the twenty-first century.

VI. PROGRAMME STRATEGIES

52. Following an evaluation of UNICEF-assisted programmes undertaken in 1992 by a group of donor Governments (E/ICEF/1992/CRP.7), the Executive Board has emphasized the importance of developing an overall programming strategy for UNICEF cooperation. This general strategy should encompass a conscious choice about the balance and mix of four main strategic approaches in the context of individual country situations: a focus on the delivery of services; capacity-building for sustainable social services in assisted countries; the empowerment of participants; and advocacy to promote social goals. UNICEF experience in education in the last decade also points to the need for developing and balancing strategic approaches to adapt to the diversity of country situations. The elements of strategies in UNICEF basic education programmes are presented below.

A. Expansion of services through a focus on policy development

53. One of the UNICEF contributions to expanding and revitalizing basic education will be to support policy development and policy dialogue. Where large amounts of financial resources will be required, UNICEF will provide catalytic support to the Government for developing, testing and piloting methods and approaches, and will work with other donors, NGOs, community organizations, and the private sector. At the level of policy formulation and advocacy, UNICEF will be interested in all aspects of education, but UNICEF financial and technical assistance will be directed strategically on the basis of an assessment of where assistance is vital and what other aid providers are doing in the area. UNICEF support will include:

(a) Developing and strengthening a legal and policy framework which clarifies the responsibilities and rights of citizens, civil society and the different levels of Government in regard to guaranteeing the provision of universal primary education. UNICEF also will help, where appropriate, to develop national and subnational education plans, with appropriate cost structures, to expand and improve primary education;

(b) Establishing decentralized, local, area- and school-based mechanisms for the planning and management of universal primary education, with a particular focus on the development of mobilizing and coordinating organizations such as village education committees and parent-teacher associations (PTAs). Support at higher levels of the system will be required in order to develop the policies, norms, programmes and training activities required to implement such an area-based approach;

(c) Strengthening the monitoring of progress towards universal primary education at national, subnational and local levels. Such monitoring should include the development of methods at the local level (e.g., through PTAs or education committees) to identify children not in school and those at risk of dropping out. Strategies need to be developed for encouraging and enabling these children to enrol and remain in school, and to track them through the completion of primary education. A particularly useful activity will be to undertake, in collaboration with UNESCO and other partners, assessments of national plans for achieving EFA by a certain date;

(d) The restructuring of education budgets in favour of primary and lower secondary education, tapping new sources and promoting cost-effectiveness. Recognizing continuing constraints to the funding of basic education for Governments and donors alike, UNICEF must remain concerned with reallocating public expenditures to raise the share of primary education both within education and in total budgets. Total education resources have to be augmented by attracting the contribution from communities, the private sector and the beneficiaries. In addition, UNICEF will help to identify ways of cost-effective utilization of education budgets, promote country-level studies of cost-effective reforms and support training in costing and financing;

(e) Developing public awareness campaigns, such as national enrolment days and the periodic public review of the results of monitoring progress towards universal primary education, designed to mobilize all partners in education towards the promotion of EFA.

B. Capacity-building at different levels

54. Another major strategy for UNICEF in education is capacity-building. Failure to achieve EFA is due to a variety of problems - economic, cultural and political. But the most common problem relates to weak institutional and human capacity within a country in areas such as research, policy analysis and development, planning and programming, including costing, information collection and management and monitoring. The achievement of educational goals in terms of both quantity and quality and the sustainability of these achievements over time absolutely require enhanced national capacities in these areas. Therefore, UNICEF will assist further in:

(a) Building or enhancing, in a systematic and phased manner, the technical and professional capacities of national, provincial, district and local institutions and organizations, both inside and outside of the Government. This will include central agencies such as curriculum development and teacher-training institutions, planning and management departments, district structures, ministry training centres and local organizations such as education committees and PTAs;

(b) Developing such capacity generally, beyond the pilot project or demonstration district, with the collaboration of other aid providers and national partners so that a critical mass is developed at all levels and in all regions of a country;

(c) Promoting sustainable methods and processes of capacity-building through the systematic development of existing regional, national and subnational training institutions;

(d) Supporting the development of awareness, interests and skills in communities so that they become actively involved in education and enhancing the capacities of community structures such as the parents' committee, the village education committee and the school management body.

C. Empowerment of beneficiaries

55. The involvement of parents in education, as individuals and through parents' associations and other collective bodies, and of community leaders and organizations, is an essential component of a successful education system. Greater participation, especially that which goes beyond the mere contribution of money and labour, can lead to greater local identification with and "ownership" of schools and, thus, to higher educational demand, more and better facilities and an education of higher quality and of greater relevance to local conditions and needs. Expansion of choices and experimentation with new ways of mobilizing resources for basic education by communities and local authorities need to be supported. In order to encourage these approaches, UNICEF will:

(a) Promote policies and strategies that strengthen community participation in the financing, planning, managing, implementing and monitoring of education. This can include helping to clarify and enhance the role of parents and PTAs and local education committees; training parents and education personnel (e.g., teachers and head teachers) in methods of collaborating for better education; identifying and implementing measures for addressing gender and other disparities; and establishing mechanisms within the system to monitor the extent of community involvement and to reward schools and education officials for encouraging such involvement;

(b) Support community-initiated school construction projects through the provision of technically sound construction models and, on an exceptional basis, some locally unavailable building materials;

(c) Develop methods to enable especially disadvantaged communities (e.g., isolated population groups and ethnic minority groups) to participate in primary education effectively, paying attention to the multi-cultural dimension of education.

D. Promotion of intersectoral linkages

56. Achieving the goals of EFA will depend to a great extent on establishing a close link between basic education and the other priority needs of children and women which form the foundation of human development. Area-based integrated services programmes have been supported by UNICEF in many countries in order to combine the provision of basic services for CSD within a specified area. In order to develop an integrated and holistic education programme through strengthening intersectoral linkages, UNICEF will underscore the following:

(a) In designing curricula and teacher-training materials, content and learning activities related to health, nutrition, family planning, environment and water supply and sanitation can be consciously incorporated;

(b) Where possible, schools should be the centre of convergence of basic services, with the provision of water, sanitation, health and nutrition, education and cultural and recreational activities for the community, facilitated through school and parents' organizations;

(c) The child-to-child programme, which links health, nutrition and environmental education beyond schools to parents and communities, will be promoted;

(d) The linkage of basic education with programmes for the development of girls and women can be enhanced by incorporating gender concerns in all basic education programmes. Also, adult education programmes for women can be linked to empowerment and income-earning capacity.

57. While basic education must support and be supported by other social services and development activities, schools and teachers should not be so burdened by the demands of intersectoral links that their main task of teaching the essential learning skills of reading, writing and arithmetic and basic life skills is neglected.

E. Advocacy and social mobilization

58. With regard to advocacy, social mobilization and partnership-building, UNICEF aims to work in close collaboration with other partners in the achievement of universal primary education. To do so, UNICEF will:

(a) Strengthen alliances at international, national and local levels, with a view to promoting and implementing basic education for all. Such

alliances will encourage collaboration in policy studies and dialogue, planning, capacity-building and the coordinated implementation of programmes;

(b) Continue to work with other agencies at headquarters, regional and national levels, including UNESCO (e.g., through the UNESCO/UNICEF JCE), UNDP, UNFPA and others;

(c) Support consensus-building, motivation and orientation of key stake-holders at all levels of the government hierarchy and sectors of society to promote a greater priority and commitment to EFA.

F. Resource mobilization

59. The lack of resources is often a critical bottleneck to achieving basic education. UNICEF has an important role to play in mobilizing attention, commitment and resources from all of its various partners, and in working collaboratively to put these resources to good use. Strategies in this regard include organizing debt relief for education. At the country level, UNICEF will encourage actions that will help to generate adequate resources for basic education, such as advocacy for the 20/20 approach and critical review of the allocation of public resources for basic education, restructuring of education budgets, allowing an appropriate role for the private sector and promoting contributions from the beneficiaries when this is not unduly burdensome. The effort to augment resources for basic education will have greater success when it is demonstrated that available resources are used efficiently and effectively.

60. UNICEF also will join advocacy for establishing compacts between individual countries and donors willing to provide sustained support for education over the medium to longer term, thus enabling poorer and least developed countries to make serious commitments to EFA. UNICEF advocacy also can be directed towards debt relief linked to education expansion and other forms of social investment as called for in the World Summit for Children Declaration and Plan of Action as well as the WSSD Programme of Action.

VII. MANAGING UNICEF COOPERATION IN BASIC EDUCATION

61. UNICEF cooperation in basic education is to be viewed within the perspective of the overall UNICEF mission for child survival, development and protection. Management of cooperation in the area of education at the country level is anchored in the country programme of cooperation and is influenced by the adequacy and effective use of the organization's human and financial resources.

62. The UNICEF country programming process ensures the placement of sectoral interventions within the broader socio-economic development framework, which promotes greater local management, an integrated approach and a synergistic outcome. Cooperation in basic education will be developed within this framework, taking the national education plans as the basis. UNICEF support will be deployed strategically, balancing activities and involvement at national, subnational and local levels and applying the strategies of advocacy, capacity-building and community participation.

63. With field offices in over 130 countries, UNICEF is well-positioned to assist countries in their efforts to reach the EFA goals. UNICEF, being a decentralized operational agency, places a great deal of responsibility on country offices and some 140 education officers in these offices to assist countries to develop and implement tailor-made programmes to suit the specific conditions of each country. In carrying out this responsibility, the education programme officers are supported by the technical expertise of the advisers from regional offices and the headquarters office in New York. The critical issues

to be addressed in this regard are twofold: (a) systematic collaboration among country, regional and headquarters staff in order to optimize UNICEF support to countries; and (b) the need to upgrade staff capacity at all levels to strengthen UNICEF overall capacity and to enhance its comparative advantage in supporting basic education. Country offices, in particular, have to work with high-level policy and decision makers, other aid providers, NGOs, communities and institutions of the civil society; therefore, the education programme officers must have a high professional standing. The increasing need for UNICEF to be involved in policy development, planning and advocacy underscores the nature of capacities required. Implementation of the UNICEF management review is expected to address this question.

64. As noted in paragraph 16 above, programme expenditure in education more than doubled between 1987 and 1994 and the plan is to increase it further by the end of the decade. In the decentralized operation, the allocation will increase only if the UNICEF country programmes allot a higher share of the programme budget to education. The country programme recommendations presented to the Executive Board in 1995 allocated an average of 17 per cent of programme budgets to education. In order to attain the corporate target, it needs to be ensured that this allocation is actually utilized and raised further. The donors of supplementary funds to UNICEF also have an important role in raising the share of programme expenditure for education. Since almost one half of UNICEF programme funds are derived from supplementary contributions, the education expenditure can be increased if donors commit additional amounts of earmarked supplementary contributions to education. By the same token, fund-raising efforts at both headquarters and country levels need to focus more attention on funding needs for basic education.

65. As a key management tool, monitoring and evaluation play an important part in the effective implementation of UNICEF programmes. Several initiatives are being undertaken, in cooperation with partner agencies, Governments and institutions of excellence, to improve the collection and use of relevant educational data. As an integral component of situation analyses, UNICEF will promote the use of comprehensive education analysis to conduct a systematic analysis of the goals, objectives, status, needs, constraints and development priorities of the national educational system. The extensive use of essential education indicators is required to support education analysis and to strengthen management information systems. This capacity will have to be enhanced at national and decentralized levels.

66. As the goal of universal primary education becomes a reality, UNICEF will have to pay greater attention to the problems of post-primary transition as well as to the other complementary elements that constitute the broad vision of basic education.

VIII. DRAFT RECOMMENDATION

67. The Executive Director recommends that the Executive Board approve the following draft recommendation:

The Executive Board,

Having reviewed the report on UNICEF strategies in basic education (E/ICEF/1995/16),

Noting with satisfaction UNICEF efforts to assist countries to achieve the goals for children in the 1990s by implementing national programmes of action and encouraging progress towards reaching the EFA decade goals;

1. Endorses the framework for education programmes, including the scope, objectives, areas of action and strategies, set forth in document E/ICEF/1995/16;

2. Encourages the UNICEF secretariat, in collaboration with national partners and external providers of assistance and in selecting strategic areas of assistance in country programmes, to continue:

(a) To focus on universal access to primary education - increasing the enrolment, retention and completion rates of learners through unified primary education systems that combine, as necessary, formal and non-formal approaches and give priority to girls;

(b) To support the improvement of quality in primary education in order to enable learners to acquire a minimum required level of skills and knowledge through, inter alia, such necessary measures as the assessment of learning achievement, child-centred learning approaches, innovations in respect of teaching personnel and their training and improvement in quality and quantity of learning materials;

(c) To promote parents' knowledge and skills and community- and family-based approaches for ECD as well as "second chance" basic education for youth and women as supporting elements of universal primary education;

(d) To increase allocations in country programmes of both general and supplementary resources to basic education in line with medium-term plan targets and the key role of basic education in promoting sustainable progress in the well-being and development of children;

3. Urges the UNICEF secretariat to put a greater emphasis in its programmes on:

(a) Targeting the major systemic problems in basic education such as equity, efficiency, quality, relevance, costs and financing and management, and countries and regions with the greater need and challenge in basic education, such as the nine high-population countries, Africa and least developed countries, focusing on appropriate national policies and strategies to address these problems;

(b) Building the capacity of countries to plan and implement education programmes by strengthening national and local institutions, with particular attention to supporting decentralized and area-based planning, management, monitoring and mobilization for universal primary education;

(c) Adopting a systemic and systematic approach to long-term education development, promoting cost-effective reforms, resource mobilization and sustainable strategies for universal opportunities with quality enhancement;

(d) Providing education services for children in emergencies, in collaboration with other organizations, with the aim of restoring as much normalcy as possible in children's lives, and expanding education opportunities for children in other difficult situations, including working children and children with disabilities, recognizing that education programmes must be responsive to different circumstances and characteristics of children;

4. Requests the Executive Director to assess and adopt measures to reorient and strengthen UNICEF capacity to play its role effectively in assisting developing countries to reach the goals of EFA.

Annex

PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT, RETENTION, GENDER DISPARITY AND GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT BY COUNTRY/REGION a/

Country/region	Primary school enrolment ratio (gross, 1986-1992) Total	Male	Female	Percentage of primary school children reaching grade 5 (1986-1992)	Primary school enrolment ratio: girls as percentage of boys (1986-1992)	GNP per capita (in United States dollars) (1992)
Sub-Saharan Africa b/						
Somalia	12	15	8	..	53	150
Ethiopia	25	29	21	31	72	110
Malawi	26	32	19	76	59	310
Niger	29	37	21	82	57	280
Guinea	37	50	24	59	48	510
Burkina Faso	38	46	29	63	63	300
Liberia	40	51	28	..	55	450
Sierra Leone	48	56	39	..	70	160
Mauritania	56	63	48	77	76	530
Benin	59	78	39	47	50	410
Senegal	59	68	49	88	72	780
Guinea-Bissau	60	77	42	20	55	220
Mozambique	60	69	50	34	72	60
Chad	65	89	41	76	46	220
Malawi	66	72	60	46	83	210
Central African Republic	69	85	52	65	61	410
United Republic of Tanzania	69	70	68	79	97	110
Côte d'Ivoire	70	81	58	73	72	670
Burundi	70	77	63	62	82	210
Nigeria	71	79	62	65	78	320
Rwanda	71	72	70	60	97	250
Uganda	71	78	64	..	82	170
Zaire	76	87	64	..	74	230
Ghana	77	84	69	69	82	450
Angola	91	95	87	34	92	610
Madagascar	92	93	91	38	98	230
Kenya	95	97	93	67	96	310
Zambia	97	101	92	..	91	290
Cameroon	101	109	93	66	85	820
Mauritius	106	104	108	98	104	2 700
Lesotho	107	97	116	65	120	590
Togo	111	134	87	70	65	390
Botswana	119	116	121	84	104	2 790
Namibia	119	112	126	53	113	1 610
Zimbabwe	119	120	118	94	98	570
South Asia						
Afghanistan	25	32	17	43	53	280
Bhutan	25	31	19	..	61	180
Pakistan	42	54	30	48	56	420
Bangladesh	77	83	71	47	86	220
Nepal	81	108	54	..	50	170
India	98	112	84	62	75	310
Sri Lanka	108	110	106	95	96	540

Annex (continued)

Country/region	Primary school enrolment ratio (gross, 1986-1992) Total	Male	Female	Percentage of primary school children reaching grade 5 (1986-1992)	Primary school enrolment ratio: girls as percentage of boys (1986-1992)	GNP per capita (in United States dollars) (1992)
East Asia and the Pacific c/						
Papua New Guinea	71	76	65	69	86	950
Thailand	90	92	88	88	96	1 840
Malaysia	93	93	93	98	100	2 790
Lao People's Democratic Republic	98	112	84	..	75	250
Mongolia	98	96	100	..	104	780
Viet Nam	103	106	100	..	94	240
Myanmar	104	107	100	..	93	220
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	104	108	100	..	93	970
Republic of Korea	105	103	106	100	103	6 790
Hong Kong	105	105	105	..	100	15 360
Singapore	109	110	107	100	97	15 730
Philippines	112	113	111	75	98	770
Indonesia	117	119	114	83	96	670
China	123	127	118	86	93	470
Middle East and North Africa d/						
Sudan	50	56	43	94	77	420
Kuwait	56	56	55	..	98	16 150
Morocco	66	78	54	80	69	1 030
Saudi Arabia	77	82	72	88	88	7 510
Yemen	77	111	43	..	39	520
Algeria	96	103	88	95	85	1 840
Jordan	97	96	98	100	102	1 120
Oman	100	104	96	96	92	6 480
Egypt	101	109	93	91	85	640
Syrian Arab Republic	109	115	103	92	90	1 160
Iraq	111	120	102	72	85	1 500
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	112	118	105	90	89	2 200
Lebanon	113	115	110	..	96	2 150
Turkey	113	115	110	98	96	1 980
United Arab Emirates	116	117	114	89	97	22 020
Tunisia	117	123	110	88	89	1 720

Annex (continued)

Country/region	Primary school enrolment ratio (gross, 1986-1992) Total	Male	Female	Percentage of primary school children reaching grade 5 (1986-1992)	Primary school enrolment ratio: girls as percentage of boys (1986-1992)	GNP per capita (in United States dollars) (1992)
Latin America and the Caribbean						
Haiti	56	58	54	47	93	370
El Salvador	77	76	77	45	101	1 170
Guatemala	79	84	73	..	87	980
Bolivia	85	89	81	60	91	680
Dominica	96	95	96	..	101	1 050
Trinidad and Tobago	96	96	96	89	100	3 940
Chile	98	99	97	98	98	2 730
Brazil	99	101	97	39	96	2 770
Venezuela	99	98	100	86	102	2 910
Nicaragua	101	98	104	46	106	340
Costa Rica	103	103	102	84	99	1 960
Cuba	103	103	102	91	99	1 170
Honduras	105	102	107	..	105	580
Jamaica	107	105	108	98	103	1 340
Panama	107	109	105	82	96	2 420
Uruguay	108	109	107	94	98	3 340
Paraguay	110	111	108	70	97	1 380
Colombia	111	110	112	58	102	1 330
Argentina	112	108	115	..	106	6 050
Mexico	114	115	112	80	97	3 470
Ecuador	118	119	117	67	98	1 070
Peru	123	125	120	..	96	950

Source: UNICEF, The State of the World's Children 1995.

a/ Countries are listed according to total gross primary enrolment rates (from low to high).

b/ Data not available for the Congo, Eritrea, Gabon and South Africa.

c/ Data not available for Cambodia.

d/ Data not available for the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.